

CONSTRAINTS OF CHINA'S EMERGENCE AS A POLITICAL ALTERNATIVE TO THE WESTERN WORLD

Dr. Binod Singh*

ABSTRACT

With the end of Western era, the ideological dominance of the West is under challenge. The new breed of intellectuals are rooted in their own tradition and yet not antagonistic to the logic of universalization of categories. China, after having arrived at the world stage as the economic power house, is striving to build an alternative to the Western world order based on Confucian tradition. The paper reviews the current Chinese domestic political situation and attempts to predict its impact on the emergence of China as an alternative to the Western World order.

Keywords : Confucian values, CCP, Central Committee, Beijing Consensus, Daniel Bell, Deng Xiaoping, tao guang yang hui

INTRODUCTION

In the 21st Century, when the world enters into the “Post-Western World order” we encounter a growing debate among the prevailing political theory to explain this political and ideological transition. The old world order is collapsing and it's giving way to a new world order which is perceived to be multipolar.¹ In our own generation we have witnessed the rise and fall of communism, and mused over Francis Fukuyama's clarion call of the end of the history. Now we are witnessing the end of capitalism as some of the main torch bearers of capitalism are enmeshed in financial mess and sooner or later they will succumb to the nemesis of their own making. The Western world is also facing moral crisis and taking disastrous steps in insanity such as military intervention in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and now Syria and Mali. Ideologically also, the Western intellectuals have started looking towards the East for their continued survival.

At the same time we have seen the rise of the Rest, especially the rise of the East. India and China has occupied the center stage of the world as they continue to become more dynamic and vibrant both economically and politically. China, after winning over the world market² has now launched a new campaign to challenge the Western hegemony and Western values in order to create an alternative to the Western Capitalism. But there have been different voices with regard to Chinese emergence as an alternative to current domination of western world order. Economic success does not directly imply a country to take over the role of a world superpower. China has to set some clear examples in domestic and external governance so that its ideas and institutions find appeal among countries outside its region. In the following sections, we review the current Chinese domestic political situation and attempt to predict its impact on the emergence of China as an alternative to the Western World order.

The Current Political Setup

Every political system is made of its own historical discourse and developmental process, and whether it can be exported as a packaged ideology to outside its boundary is a question solely to be decided by the importer (the searcher) of the ideology. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has ruled China since 1949 and we do not see any greater challenge to its rule in the near future. The party is in the full grip of the power and there

*Dr. Binod Singh is Assistant Professor in Peking University, China and Vice President of the Society for Asian Integration.

is hardly any strong oppositions group organized to challenge its supremacy, except some individuals and intellectuals who have challenged the legitimacy of the party to rule the country. There has been some minimal political reform in the early 1980s when Deng Xiaoping took control of the party. In the late 1980s and 1990s China witnessed the introduction of greater political checks and balances at the top leadership under the initiative of Deng Xiaoping. But even today the party continues to be Marxist Leninist in its hierarchical structure. The highest formal organ of power is the Politburo Standing Committee (PSC) consisting of seven members, currently headed by the General Secretary of the CCP. Other important institutions are the State Council, led by the Premier, Wen Jiabao, and the National People's Congress (NPC), a largely rubber-stamp parliament. The PLA is the armed instrument of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and organizationally, subordinate to the Party apparatus. Career military officers are CCP members, and units at the company level and above have political officers responsible for personnel decisions, propaganda, and counterintelligence. Major decisions at all levels are made by CCP committees, and also led by the political officers and commanders. The PLA's highest decision-making body, the Central Military Commission (CMC), is technically a department of the CCP Central Committee, but is staffed primarily by military officers. The Chairman is a civilian, usually the General Secretary of the CCP and the President. Other members include the commanders of the service arms and the four general headquarters departments, and a number of Vice Chairmen. Vice President Xi Jinping, the chosen successor to the PRC President Hu Jintao, is already the Chairman and the only other civilian on the CMC.³

Current Leadership Transition and Challenges

China has seen a power transition from the fourth generation (Hu Jintao-Wen Jiabao system) to the fifth (Xi Jinping-Li Keqiang system) after the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China on December 15, 2012. The previous generations of China's leaders were focused on growing the country's economy. However, now that China has emerged as an economic superpower—the second largest economy in the world—policy changes made by the new generation of leadership will have broader implications for China and the world. In the current period of political transition, the party is faced with the need to balance, on the one hand, the domestic expectations of a burgeoning middle class who are pressing for social, political and economic change and, on the other, the conservative views of elderly statesmen and military commanders. The hard handling of 'Bo Xilai incident' sends a clear signal to all stakeholders that the party will not tolerate any open factionalism and indiscipline.

The Western version of opinion, that China, since ruled by one party (the CPC) is unstable in long run might be over exaggerated. But the ruling party is facing severe challenges which can hinder its prospect of emerging as an alternative to western liberal democratic order. The ruling communist party continues to command the hold of its power across the length and breadth of the world's third largest territory and the most populous nation on this planet. Chinese citizens enjoy only limited rights and their right to freedom of speech is restricted by various conditions. The current Chinese political system limits the free flow of information, lacks the self-correcting mechanisms of democracy, and hence stifles creativity. Its problems are daunting. Income inequality is growing. Inflation is a threat. The country is rapidly aging. The divide between urban and rural quality of life is vast. Corruption is widespread (Zakaria, 2009). The rising Gini-index and wealth gap among the rich and the poor has emerged as a major social and political destabilizing force in the country. The rich and poor in China cannot live in harmony with each other as the officials are alleged to have favored their kith and kin in getting rich first.

In 2010, China has emerged to be the world's largest economy overtaking Japan and also the largest trading nation in the world. The year, 2011 also marked the Tenth anniversary of China's joining of WTO. Despite all the above achievements, China is emerging as one of the most unequal society in terms of the gap between rural and urban areas. Deng, who was the chief architect of the Chinese economic reform, then said that "to

grow rich is glorious” and allowed the theory of *“let a few pockets of country get rich first”*. The same theory is now haunting back the country. Although the Chinese government shifts its policy away from an insular focus on economic expansion and moves to pursue sustainable development, the working-age population (ages 15-59) begins to decline in 2014, and by 2020 the percentage of the population over 60 will reach 17%. Therefore China will experience a large generational shift between 2020 and 2030. This decade will mark the first time that those born and raised as single children under the “one-child” law will acquire positions of power and it is difficult to predict exactly what effects this development will have on Chinese society.

In 2012, there was less number of coal mine accidents compared to the last year. But the environmental cost of the pollution caused by chemical industry has been claiming the lives of average citizens. It was in Dalian, in October that thousands of citizens took to road in order to demand the closure of a chemical plant, amidst fears of a toxic leak. Government has to finally shut down the plant on the assurance of relocating it to other region. Later in the same area, an oil spill which was for long concealed by the authorities, but when discovered by the public and spread on Weibo, the Government was forced to take actions. As the time goes on, and number of cancer patients rises in the country, the cost of China emerging as World’s factory seems to be very high. There were similar protests in thousands across China demanding shut down of polluting plants and other scandals. The Government officials especially from the National Development Reform Commission have been trying hard to ensure the consumer rights and reign into the food adulterity but with little success. The Chinese mothers distrust the local milk food and rely mainly upon imported quality. There were similar scandals which exposed the farce of rule of law in the country. As the use of Social media grows in China, it will be further difficult for the party to continue its propaganda.

As per the reports in domestic media, the incidents of school bus accidents exposed that how Chinese society is still vulnerable to poverty and underdevelopment despite China emerging as the second largest economy.⁴ The social security system in the country is still in complete jeopardy and the health care is unaffordable to majority of its citizens. China will be facing an aging society in the coming years when there will be much more dependent people than the number of working population. Social unrest in China is mainly rooted in the uneven distribution of the wealth among its different regions; especially the gap between the coastal and Western region is rising. Chinese villages are getting deserted and all the young people are moving to cities. At the same time many party officials are alleged to have sent their families abroad and transfer illegal wealth to them. There has been growing trend among many private entrepreneurs in China to move abroad and acquire foreign nationality. Like in India, the life of common Chinese is getting harder due to rising food inflation without relative increment in their salaries. Inflation did occupy most of the working time of Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao, but it was reigned into with limited success. The realty sector for the first time in a decade saw a fall of 5-10 percent in price. Majority of the Chinese people cannot afford to buy one sweet home as the ratio of their income to the housing price is quite disproportional. Nevertheless, although China surpasses Japan to become the world’s second largest economy in GDP terms, per-capita income and social infrastructure remain at levels on par with an undeveloped nation. Decades of rapid economic growth may come to an end before income disparities and the gap between the urban and rural areas are corrected and those Chinese who are yet to benefit from economic development will remain be left behind.⁵ The frustration and discontent with the Communist Party felt by those who have had their lives and health ruined by worsening environmental problems reaches its peak. Popular demonstrations and riots that had until this point remained more-or-less isolated expand across regional borders, and becoming far more organized in the process. The Communist Party, overwhelmed by the massive riots now occurring throughout the country, attempts to maintain social order by force and is showered with criticism from international society. Economic growth grinds to a halt and China descends into chaos. (PHP Report, 2008)

Another looming crisis the Chinese government will be facing in 2013 is the huge bad loans concurred by its state owned banks. As Dr. Subramianum Swamy has predicted in his research paper⁶ and also other media

has reported that the Local governments have borrowed huge amount of loan from these banks which needs to be bailed out sooner or later. However, the government denies this banking crisis, and argues that there is no risk to Chinese financial system as China enjoys a huge foreign currency reserves which can be utilized to bail out these banks. However, if it goes the other way around, then a financial crisis is in waiting and the housing bubble burst (ghost townships) can send China into chaos.

But at the same time ,the party has started a crackdown against the corrupt officials and it is supposed to be cleaned and purified in the coming years. This has won the sympathy of most of its citizens and hence the legitimacy of the party will be maintained. The top party leaders have already signaled for political reform and establishment of the rule of law. But all this will not materialize into an early holding of popular elections in China. China will continue to be ruled by Communist party. Nowadays, in mainland China or outside, no public intellectual will desist from using the “D” word⁷ in their formal or informal talk or lectures. It has become an accepted norm that China is developing towards a democratic society as well as polity on its own pace. The censorship on discussion of this topic in the open space no longer holds under the articulate public intellectuals at Chinese Universities as well as millions of bloggers.

Prospects for Democracy

What are the prospects for democracy in contemporary China? The students of liberal-democracy will be certainly disappointed with the progress of the democratic institutions building in the recent history of Communist China. It seems that “Democracy” is normally an ideal to be achieved for China in the coming years. But it seems that, in the coming decade, the CCP does not seem to be serious about launching China into democratic mode of governance. China calls itself a government of democratic parties that are led by the communist party. One of the other parties is the China Democratic League (Minmeng) which has more than 100,000 members, who are mostly educated intellectuals. On the other hand, the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce (ACFIC) is far larger than any of the democratic parties. It is made of the mostly rich private entrepreneurs who are adopted by the party.

But whether China will become a democratic country based on popular elections and civil rights with freedom of speech have raised doubts among its longtime observers. If one is well versed in Mandarin, then he can find several websites which have listed extensive articles and papers on rural democratic construction in China. These intellectuals are playing safe by not questioning the legitimacy of the party and at the same time embracing certain values of Western Liberal democracy. Therefore some commentators conclude that they are not committed to the goal of democracy in China. In their recent writings and pamphlets, even they have attempted to redefine the concept of democracy in a Chinese context. Some Western Scholars, such as Daniel Bell, who teaches Philosophy at Tsinghua University have also joined this chorus by publishing few works in favor of East Asian illiberal tradition of democracy based on Confucian ethics.⁸ These scholars have questioned the Western values and Human Rights which may not be perceived in East Asia in the same way.⁹

Improvements in the standard of living stimulate a desire among the Chinese people to actively participate in the political process and this eventually evolves into a democracy movement. While there remain concerns that rapid democratization will foment political instability, a shared awareness spreads throughout society that progress toward political democratization and the realization of a “harmonious society” are necessary to maintain economic development. Particularly those young Party members who majored in law, economics, and other similar fields and were educated overseas begin to champion gradual democratization. China’s political and social development gradually catches up with its economic development.

The paradox of the Chinese society today is that at one hand they are longing for a clean, accountable and popular government based on democratic values, but they are also scared to disturb the current stability in the country, which has been propagated to be major factor behind China’s continued prosperity. The people in power argue that demand for democracy and liberty is limited to a section of intellectuals who have studied or

being trained in the Western Countries, and the majority of Chinese people continue to believe in the might of the communist Party in leading their nation. But the fact is that the Chinese are scared of power vacuum which will be created, if legitimacy of the communist party is questioned, and an alternative form of government based on Western Liberal system is proposed. At the same time, the grassroots democracy is taking place in the country in a very controlled way. Village level elections as well as local elections in the cities are getting popular, but still more than 80% of the elected candidates are party members. If this is the pace of democratization in the country, then it may take another century for China to join the mainstream of nation-states. Transition to Democracy in China seems to be a mirage.

Hence, the future of the Chinese Communist party seems to be full of challenges as the growing demands for free speech and accountability steps up in the coming years. The areas resided by minorities such as Tibet and Xinjiang continue to be under constant police patrolling, and there has been heavy crackdown in these regions due to growing activities of terrorism and secessionist activities. In the last two months, several bomb blast have occurred in shopping malls of the city of Xi An and Wu Han without any trace of conspirators. But to any regular visitor who comes to China, it appears to be a normal country with stable polity and dynamic economy. It is up to the Party leaders who may either chose to liberalize their control on media and the civil society or further tighten their grip in panic. The consequences of each of the two actions will be unpredictable. Currently, the biggest threat to the ruling party in China is corruption, and if, it is not reigned into in time, there could be lasting political and social instability in this country.

The policies of the next administration are unlikely to depart significantly from those of Hu Jintao. But there have been some gestures of political reform from new leader Xi Jinping who have openly talked about reforming the party and carrying out long-awaited political reforms. He recognized that official corruption has become the Achilles heel of the entire system and hence started a cleanup campaign across the party organization and country's administration. More than thousand officials are being tried and there has been a new revelation of corruption on the social media almost every day.

Will China emerge as a Political Alternative to the West?

On the other hand, Chinese scholars have reinvigorated the debate on whether China should adopt a Western style political system or should carve out its own socialist democratic model. In the social media as well as among the serious academicians, the Chinese intellectuals have launched a countrywide debate focused on the pros and cons of Western democracy. They are also joined by some China watchers from the West such as Professor Daniel Bell who recently published an article expressing the view that Chinese Meritocracy has several advantages over Western capitalist institutions.

This is the second wave of Confucian challenge to Western political and economic ideas and institutions. The first was in the early 1990s, when the four East Asian countries (and regions also known as four little dragons including Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan and S. Korea) achieved miraculous success in their economic growth and attributed it to their Confucian ethics. A huge debate was generated among economists and policy makers on the issue of Confucian collectivism vs. Western Individualism. Singaporean leader Lee Kuan-Yew preached Americans about his country's achievement guided by Confucian society and Authoritarian state. But it faded away once these Asian economies faced a severe currency crisis in the late 1997-98.

Now the same thing is being advised by the Chinese policy makers to their Western counterparts in US and European who are in deep financial mess since the unfolding of Subprime mortgage crisis in 2007-08. Chinese economists find their own economic system superior to that of Western capitalism and hence came out with the idea of "Beijing Consensus" (A term coined by a Latin American Scholar Joshua Cooper Ramo). But there have been differences with regard to the concept of Asian Values, and Indian scholars have never supported these kinds of perceptions. Many overseas scholars of Indian origin such as Dr. Amartya Sen have

argued that democracy is a universal value, hence it is misguided for East Asian leaders to advocate Asian values or an Asian development model.¹⁰ Chinese Confucianism has found its main constituency among the African countries as well as the Arab world. Most of these countries are victim of American propaganda of promoting democracy.

In its long history Chinese conception of political rights has evolved from various sources such as Confucianism, Chinese Republicanism, and lately Marxism. Some Chinese intellectuals like David Kang have propagated that in East Asia, China should restore its historical Sino-centric tributary system of world order which is quite an odd idea to the current popular Euro-centric capitalist-world system.¹¹ Scholarship on Chinese legalism has been scanty, especially in contrast to that on Confucianism. But recent works of Prof. Yan Xuetong of Tsinghua University has brought this school in perspective along with prevailing Confucianism. Legalism has been criticized for its totalitarian philosophy by other commentators, as Communist China has been watched for its totalitarian politics.¹²

There is no doubt that China will democratize at its own pace, but what kind of democracy it will have and how it will be different from the Western liberal democracy is yet not clear. There has been no party document except some references in the 18th Party congress with regard to political reform, which clearly underlines the fact that China will carve out its own course of political institutions which will suit its national conditions and not introduce western style popular elections to elect its top leaders.¹³ In fact, China is no more a communist country apart from retaining all the communist and Stalinist nomenclature. The Chinese society as well as the Chinese State has practiced pragmatic socialism and has adopted most of the economic and social reforms which were mainly practiced by Capitalist countries. As China's economic development brings greater standards of living to greater number of the population, concern for environmental degradation is expected to increase and demands for a greener development path are expected to grow ever louder.¹⁴ Therefore the new left in the country holds the view that China's present leaders have turned their back upon revolutionary solutions to the problems of socialism. In an interview in 1980, Deng Xiaoping upheld socialism but refused to predict if it would prevail in the future.

Predicting Future

It is an impossible task to predict the future of Chinese course in the coming years. The China collapse theory has been propagated since the 1980s, but on the contrary, the country has been growing stronger and stronger, and has come up to challenge the world's sole Super power, the United States. Brimming with confidence consequent to its economic success and social stability, China, now with extensive experience of working through maze of multilateral institutions, seeks to play a role in international society as a responsible power. Now it is evident that, while the US was busy fighting the War on Terror, China managed to achieve several milestones and emerged as the most formidable challenger to American supremacy. Beyond doubt, China will be the most important country to be watched in 2013, for her economic, military and foreign policy maneuvers. China has rapidly re-emerged as a major regional power in East Asia. Although this represents a return to a long-established historical pattern, the ability of China's political elites to reassure nervous neighbors about the implications of its rise will be a major test of its evolving and increasingly sophisticated foreign policies. For India, the military rise of communist China will continue to be the foremost challenge in her foreign policy making. India will find it difficult to reconcile her national interest with that of giant northern neighbor.

On the external front, it was stated in the 2008 and 2010 PRC Defence White Papers that, "*China will never seek hegemony...no matter how developed it becomes*".¹⁵ Furthermore, Zheng Bijian the former Vice Chairman of the Central Party School stated that "*China will not follow the path of...Germany and Japan leading up to World War II, when these countries violently plundered resources and pursued hegemony.*" Further, speaking at Cambridge University in February 2009, Premier Wen proclaimed: "*The idea that a strong country must be a hegemon does not sit well with China. Hegemonism is at odds with our*

*cultural tradition, and it runs counter to the wishes of the Chinese people. China's development harms no one, nor does it threaten anyone. China wants to be a great country of peace, a great country of learning, a great country of cooperation, and China exerts effort on building a harmonious world."*¹⁶

In order to maintain growth, the Chinese leadership desires a peaceful international environment and the possibility that it would initiate large-scale military conflict remains extremely small. Outside its borders, China does adopt policies to limit American hegemony, but avoids direct confrontation, choosing instead to maintain a cooperative relationship with the United States.¹⁷ By quietly carrying out military and intelligence exchanges with the United States, Japan, and other neighboring countries and making a sincere effort to see that its defense expenditures and strategic intentions are made as transparent as possible, China contributes to confidence-building in the region. Rather than impatiently forcing a solution to the Taiwan issue, China adopts a posture that maintains the status quo and stresses a solution through dialogue. However, the danger that the Taiwan issue or territorial disputes in the South and East China Sea could result in an unplanned military clash remains.

China continues to face a number of domestic contradictions and societal problems and, even after its economy stalls for a brief period of time, it will irresistibly evolve into a political and economic global power. While the global economy faced recession in 2011, Chinese economy grew at the rate of above 9%, which was possible mainly by huge investment in infrastructure sector. The current system will work as long as the Chinese economy continues to achieve high growth and the government could earn ample money through tax revenues. However, when the bubble economy will burst; China will suffer hard landing with possibility of major social instability and change of regime. But the party may continue to rein if there is no strong and viable opposition group to challenge its legitimacy. The party control is still quite strong and the Chinese capitalism lurks forward as the morphed form of planned socialism.

Footnote

¹ However, some continue to argue that the world is still dominated by US hegemony and China is emerging to play an important role in the world governance. On the eve of US President Obama's visit to China in 2009, the Chinese media was overwhelmed with the view of New World order emerging in the 21st century to which they put the label of G-2 (although the term was first used by an American itself). The G-2 which is China and America (Niall Ferguson of Harvard University has coined Chimerica to represent the symbiosis of two powers), was coined by Zbigniew Brzezinski, who said that the two countries will be at the driver's seat of the new global governance. Obama had also said in his Town Hall speech that China is such an important country that no global issue can be resolved without her cooperation. This single remark clearly puts China at par with the United State in terms of global influence. But it also appears that Obama is playing a double card by asserting the USA to be a Pacific nation and therefore seeking for the US an important role in the peace and stability of this region

² The emergence of China as the most important player in the Asia-Pacific region is a fact now. There is no doubt that the Asia Pacific region is now at the center of the global politics and it has subdued the importance of Atlantic region. The Chinese economy overtook the Japanese economy in 2010 and became the second largest after the USA. It is expected to surpass the US GDP sometime around 2020 (World Bank, 2010). It is believed that, China's rise represents the key driver in the evolving security landscape in Asia. China is now attracting regional states with its economic power and is offering competing vision to the U.S.-centric "hub and spoke" system of alliances. China's increasing economic, diplomatic, and military strength is compelling countries to rethink existing security arrangements and take initial steps that may lead to the formation of regional groupings of nations with common interests and values.

³ China's Ministry of National Defense is a relatively small office specializing in military-related tasks that are the responsibility of the civilian government rather than the armed forces, including foreign military relations, mobilization, recruitment, and civil support to military operations. The Minister of Defense is a uniformed

military officer and CMC member. The PLA currently has less representation in key party decision-making bodies than in the mid-1990s or even the mid-2000s. With the passing of China's revolutionary generation, fewer national leaders hail from a military background. However, PLA leaders are increasingly inclined to voice their thoughts and opinions on international affairs in the public domain. For further details related with Chinese Decision making on national security see http://www.defense.gov/pubs/pdfs/2011_CMPR_Final.pdf

⁴ Despite the tall claim (also supported by WB economists) that 500 million people have been brought out of poverty, ADB report said that millions of them are on periphery and if the economy slows down then these people will be pushed back into poverty. The Chinese Society is currently witnessing widening economic and social disparity. As a result, the contrast between urban prosperity and rural depopulation has become sharper, which is a major problem for Chinese society.

⁵ The Chinese government maintains the quadrupling of per-capita GDP in the two decades between 2000 and 2020 as official government policy. It successfully shifts from fast-paced growth to sustainable development, implements adjustments to the industrial structure, and achieves its objective. Labor-intensive industries are transferred to the mid-west and people in rural areas also receive the blessings of economic development. (PHP, 2008)

⁶ See Subramanian Swamy, (2005), Financial System Constraints in China and India-A Comparative Perspective, SCMS Journal of Indian Management, Vol.2(4).

⁷ "D" for Democracy.

⁸ Joanne R. Bauer and Daniel A. Bell, editors. The East Asian Challenge for Human Rights. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. Also see: Daniel A. Bell. East Meets West: Human Rights and Democracy in East Asia. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.

⁹ The 1993 Bangkok Declaration constituted the most serious challenge to the movement in its short life by calling into question the universality of its normative claims. Increasingly self-assured as a result of tremendous economic growth, Asian governments started to champion their own Asian values. They also began to denounce what they considered to be self-righteous preaching by Western states that in many cases were responsible for a colonial legacy of rights abuses in the Asian countries over which they now sat in judgment, and in any event had human rights problems of their own, back at home. Although Asian leaders stopped short of denying outright the universality of human rights, their assertion that human rights must reflect the particular circumstances of particular country at particular time smacked of a cultural relativism that threatened to erode the seeming consensus on human rights that had developed over the previous five decades. The Bangkok Declaration along with the statements of Asian governments at the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights in 1993 plus the Asia-Pacific Non-Governmental Organizations' response to the Bangkok Declaration can be found in James T. H. Tang, ed., Human Rights and International Relations in the Asia-Pacific Region (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995).

¹⁰ Amartya Sen, "Democracy as a Universal Value," Journal of Democracy 10, no. 3 (1999):15.

¹¹ China is only the latest name of the Middle Kingdom which has remained isolated and closed for millenniums. Most of the Chinese still think local and behave in a narrow setup of the "Tianxia" (or the Chinese World) mindset which tells them that they are at the helm of world affairs. Japanese think tank (PHP) research have predicted that, the most probable scenario for "China in 2020" is that of "China as an immature power," not a "mature power." The report also professed that the like-minded Asian countries such as Japan and India should work together to avoid the scenario of "China as a hegemonic power," or "China as an unstable power," and "total collapse." The report warned about China's hard landing after a long period of spectacular growth (civil unrest).

¹² For a concise recapitulation of this legalist view in contrast to the Confucian position, see A. C. Graham, "The Place of Reason in Ancient Chinese Philosophical Tradition," in Chunshu Chang, ed., *The Making of China: Main Themes in Premodern Chinese History* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1975), pp. 72-84. Liang Qichao analyzes in sociological terms the legalist focus on the concentration of power as a necessary stage in historical development (*History of Chinese Political Thought*, p.125).

¹³ The 18th Party Congress report is available at [http:// www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012cpc/2012-11/18/content_15939493.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012cpc/2012-11/18/content_15939493.htm).

¹⁴ China has thus far permitted the establishment of environmental NGOs to appease foreign audiences and provide useful information regarding the state of the country's environment and popular opinion in that regard. But the standard it follows for environmental reporting are quite different than practiced in other countries. The US embassy comes out with its own pmi level with regard to the air quality in Beijing.

¹⁵ China began publishing defense white papers in 1998, partly as a means of increasing transparency in response to regional concerns about the growing capabilities and actions of the People's Liberation Army (PLA). See Information Office of the State Council..., 'China's National Defense in 2008: I The Security Situation';

¹⁶ See "China in the Light of Her Development," Speech by Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, Wen Jiabao, Cambridge University, United Kingdom, February 2, 2009.

¹⁷ Following Deng Xiaoping's advice to focus on building national strength and avoid conflict with other powers (i—IQ{Qfftao guang yang hui), China continues to promote an "omni-directional foreign policy" in order to ensure continued economic development and, despite openly protesting America's unipolar domination of the international system, makes every effort to avoid direct confrontation. China not only attempts to establish leadership in Asia, but also actively works to expand its diplomacy with states in Africa and Latin America in order to guarantee access to energy resources.

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